

FORM C – OBJECT

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

49/165	Boston North	B	900
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town: Lexington

Place (*neighborhood or village*): Lexington Green

Photograph



Address or Location: Belfry Park, Clarke Street

Name: Old Belfry Monument

Ownership: Public Private

Type of Object (*check one*):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> statue | <input type="checkbox"/> monument |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bust | <input type="checkbox"/> milestone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> group composition | <input type="checkbox"/> marker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> religious shrine | <input type="checkbox"/> boundary marker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other (<i>specify</i>): reproduction belfry | |

Date of Construction: 1910

Source: Hudson, vol. 1, p. 504

Designer/Sculptor: NA

Materials: wood

Alterations (*with dates*):

1964 – new (used) bell installed

Topographic or Assessor's Map



Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date**

Acreage: 2.03 acres

Setting: hilltop accessed from Clarke Street

Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf

Organization: Lexington Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): Oct. 2009

INVENTORY FORM C CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

BELFRY PARK

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

B

900

___ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

DESIGN ASSESSMENT

Describe the design features of the object and evaluate in terms of other similar types of objects within the community.

Set atop a low rocky outcropping on the hill overlooking Clarke Street and the Green, this reproduction belfry is a wooden structure measuring 6' x 6' x 18', sheathed in clapboards and capped by a hip roof. Centered on the roof is a simple, open belfry which is square in plan and constructed of simple wooden members, topped by a pyramidal roof. A wooden sign is mounted on one side above a vertical board door. The belfry is surrounded by a simple iron fence.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Explain the history of the object and how it relates to the development of the community.

The original belfry was located on the Green and rang the alarm that the British troops were coming on the night of April 18-19, 1775. Constructed in 1761, the building originally stood on Belfry Hill behind Lt. Jonas Munroe's House. It was moved to the Green where it stood until to 1797. In 1797 the belfry was sold to the Parker family (John Parker, Captain of the Minute Men descendants, including Theodore Parker, transcendentalist, abolitionist and friend of Ralph Waldo Emerson). It was moved to Spring Street at the intersection with old Concord Road. It was used as a wheelwright shop. In 1891 the belfry was acquired by the Lexington Historical Society and moved to the new Hancock School lot on Clarke Street in April. On June 20, 1909 the old belfry was destroyed by a gale wind. The present reproduction was installed in March 1910. It was moved from the back end of Belfry Hill to its present site in 1913.

In March 1964 William Maloney donated a 1,600 pound bell to replace the previous badly-cracked bell. The replacement bell once hung in the Wilmington Methodist Church. In November 1971 the Katharine Harrington House at the corner of Clarke Street and Massachusetts Avenue was torn down to make way for Belfry Hill Park.

ENTIRE INSCRIPTION *(if applicable):*

THIS BELFRY WAS ERECTED ON THIS HILL IN 1761
AND REMOVED TO THE COMMON IN 1768. IN IT
WAS HUNG THE BELL WHICH RUNG OUT THE
ALARM ON THE 19TH OF APRIL 1775.
IN 1797 IT WAS REMOVED TO THE PARKER HOMESTEAD
IN THE SOUTH PART OF THE TOWN.
IN 1891 IT WAS BROUGHT BACK TO THIS HILL BY THE
LEXINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
DESTROYED BY A GALE 1909. REBUILT 1910.

INVENTORY FORM C CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

BELFRY PARK

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES:

Hinkle, Alice and Andrea Cleghorn. *Life in Lexington: 1946-1995*. Lexington: 1996, p. 69.

Hudson, Charles. *History of the Town of Lexington from its first settlement to 1868* (Revised and Continued to 1912 by the Lexington Historical Society). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913, vol. 1, p. 490.

Kelley, Beverly Allison. *Lexington: A Century of Photographs*, p. 78 & 86.

Worthen, Edwin B. *A Calendar History of Lexington, Massachusetts 1620-1946*. Lexington: Lexington Savings Bank, 1946.